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SUBJECT: US-CANADA POLMIL TALKS: FIRST IN A DECADE

Classified By: POL M/C BRIAN FLORA. REASON 1.4 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) On April 27, Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) hosted the first US/CAN political-military consultations in more than a decade. The day-long talks opened with each side providing an overview of its recently released national defense policy/strategy. Topics covered in the talks included continental security, transatlantic relations (NATO, EU and OSCE), Haiti, Venezuela, Sudan, the Global War on Terrorism, the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), India and Pakistan (raised by A/DM Wright), the EU China arms embargo, SA/LW and landmines. Discussions were substantive and informative, reinforcing shared security interests around the globe, and presenting opportunities for closer cooperation in a number of areas. END SUMMARY

2. (SBU) Led by Acting A/S for Political-Military Affairs Rose Likins, the U.S. delegation included representatives from DOD/OSD, NORTHCOM, State WHA/CAN and EUR/RPM, and Embassy Ottawa. Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) Assistant Deputy Minister for International Security Jim Wright and DG Paul Chapin led the Canadian side, flanked by DG-level representation from DND and the PCO, as well as several other divisions in FAC and Canadian Embassy representation.

"SCENESETTERS"

3. (C) In introductory remarks, A/DM Wright hailed the consultations as an opportunity to strengthen our mutual engagement on a number of issues. The meetings coincided with the release of Canada's long-awaited International Policy Statement (IPS), which included significant funding (CAD 100 million/approx. USD 80 million annually for 5 years) in support of the GOC's key foreign policy priorities:

- dealing with failed and fragile states;
- countering terrorism and organized crime;
- combating WMD proliferation; and
- promoting human security.

4. (C) In reviewing the defense component of the IPS, the GOC noted a "radical departure" from the last defense review exercise in 1994. The demands on Canadian Forces (CF) had changed dramatically in the past decade: In the post-9/11 environment there was new and increased demand for support to civil authorities and Canadian security requirements, while internationally, the CF had been stretched thin through a combination of factors. In addition to outlining the transformational changes that were needed, the new defense paper articulated CF priorities -- defense of Canada, defense of the continent, and promoting international peace and stability. To this end the GOC was expanding the size of the CF and designating a single, integrated operational area -- "CANCOM," or Canada Command -- that would balance the still-emergent demands on the domestic front (to include Arctic sovereignty concerns) with international demands for the CF. Finally, the document emphasized the primacy of a strong security and defense relationship with the United States as a basic tenet in the defense of Canada and the continent. Wright emphasized that the approach outlined in the IPS represented "a huge change in mindset" for Canadians and the government.

5. (C) Ambassador Likins thanked the GOC for taking the initiative to restart pol-mil consultations and welcomed the opportunity to amplify the US-Canada dialogue. Briefly, she outlined U.S. foreign policy priorities, from winning the GWOT as the centerpiece of U.S. policy, to the many components in aiding the spread of democracy. In all these endeavors the key to success was working with partners like Canada, whether through the G-8 Action Plan for the Global Peace Operations Initiative or bilaterally. OSD Director for Northern European Policy Jesse Kelso provided a briefing on DOD's recently completed National Defense Strategy (NDS) in support for the U.S. National Security Strategy. While he underscored that the NDS was an internal document and did not reflect U.S. government policy, Ambassador Likins hailed the unprecedented involvement of the State Department in this defense review.

CONTINENTAL DEFENSE AND SECURITY

6. (C) Reacting to the briefing on NDS, Chapin asked how the U.S. "sees Canada" in its security future. Canada had invested a great deal in the joint NORAD command, he said,

but it was unclear whether the trend might be moving toward a U.S.-only approach to defend the United States, or if the USG saw a "real future for sharing continental defense with Canada." Ambassador Likins responded that when one considered the tremendous security cooperation that had evolved post-9/11, all approaches pointed to Canada as our primary partner. That said, was Canada willing to be a full partner? This was a decision for Canadians to make. Canada had to decide if it wanted to maintain collaboration "at arm's length" or closer; the U.S. would "react" to Canada's choice. Wright asserted that Canada wanted to be a good, strong partner for its own sake; that it sees itself as America's primordial partner in defense of the continent.

17. (C) Though not an agenda topic, Wright raised the subject of missile defense as an element of continental security. The GOC had taken a certain decision "at this time," he said, but the two countries' threat perceptions were not that far apart. Canada "will need to know how the U.S. is taking (missile defense) forward"; Canada "will need to follow" the process, Wright concluded.

18. (C) The GOC also wanted to "encourage and cajole our Mexican friends" to become more engaged, to become "more aware." Stating that Canada would be looking for opportunities to bring Mexico into the discussion, Wright floated the possibility of having the NORAD/NORTHCOM Binational Planning Group look at broader hemisphere security initiatives, to include Mexico. Ambassador Likins welcomed the initiative, noting that Canada was in a unique position to engage Mexico's interest.

TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

19. (C) Opening the discussion on transatlantic relations, Chapin reaffirmed Canada's view of NATO as the cornerstone of the transatlantic relationship. He voiced Canada's deep concern about the direction in which the Alliance seemed to heading given the "overlay of EU ambitions," and appealed for greater Canada-U.S. discussion and collaboration.

110. (C) Ambassador Likins said the U.S. shared Canada's concerns and agreed that a joint Canada-US approach could provide a wake-up call. EUR/RPM Deputy Director Jeff Hovenier observed that there appeared to be some disparity between Ottawa's view and that of the Canadian mission in Brussels, which on the whole seemed more sympathetic to European perspectives. Ambassador Likins asked Hovenier to have the U.S. mission in Brussels reach out to their Canadian counterparts to promote greater collaboration on these issues. (NOTE: Discussion of ISAF caveats reported septel. END NOTE)

111. (C) Chapin said that Canada was very concerned about Russia's effort to undermine the OSCE. At the same time, OSCE achievements had brought it closer to Russia's back yard and Chapin wondered if "we" had been sensitive enough to Russia's concerns in that sense. He proposed follow-on Canada-US consultations on Russia in the NATO/OSCE context.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

112. (C) Haiti. Chapin shared Canada's concerns about the slow pace of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti's (MINUSTAH) progress and noted that Prime Minister Martin was personally engaged on this issue. Ambassador Likins noted that the U.S. and Canada share the same concerns about the situation on the ground in Haiti, including Brazil's approach to leading the MINUSTAH force, the use of MINUSTAH's civilian police (CIVPOL), and MINUSTAH's lack of an intelligence capability. Chapin commented that he didn't think Canadian CIVPOL Commissioner David Beer was getting the support he needed from MINUSTAH due to tension between military and CIVPOL forces in MINUSTAH. Ambassador Likins suggested the creation of a bilateral working group to further examine U.S. and Canadian concerns on Haiti. Chapin agreed and noted that Beer should be included in the discussion.

113. (C) Venezuela. Ambassador Likins raised concerns about Venezuela's recent arms purchases and their impact on stability in the Andean region. Venezuela's neighbors might be able to influence Venezuela and deter them from concluding these sales but they have not taken any action on this issue. It might be helpful if Canada engaged Venezuela and its neighbors on this issue. Chapin said Canada shares US concerns about Venezuelan arms purchases and is willing to engage bilaterally, though it wasn't clear that Canada had "much influence on its own." Canadian Political M/C Jon Allen also noted that Canada believes we need to find a way to engage President Chavez. Continued criticism grows his popularity and gives him a soapbox to stand on. Ambassador Likins commented that given Chavez's recent actions, it is hard to imagine how the United States could engage him. Chapin proposed sending a team down to Washington to continue this discussion and to explore a possible OAS strategy for addressing Venezuela.

14. (C) GPOI. Canada and the U.S. share concerns that some elements of the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) have not made as much progress as originally hoped. Ambassador Likins said it would be good to have the UK focus on logistics and transportation. She underscored the importance of Italy's training initiative. She noted that the U.S. had started to look a little beyond the initial implementation of GPOI and its focus on Africa. In this regard, there is a burgeoning interest in developing a Central American peacekeeping battalion through the existing CFAC mechanism. Chapin responded that Canada cannot provide financial support to the CFAC initiative but may be able to help with training through Canada's Pearson Centre for Peacekeeping, which already gives courses in Spanish. Ambassador Likins also asked Wright if Canada might be able to provide French-speaking trainers for the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (COESPU) in Vicenza, Italy. Wright responded that Canada has already provided a number of French-speaking gendarme to Haiti and a number of African countries but the GOC will see if it might be able to provide additional support to COESPU.

15. (C) GWOT. Ambassador Likins summarized achievements to date in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). She voiced U.S. gratitude for Canada's support in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and multilateral counter-terrorism activity. Wright reaffirmed Canada's commitment but voiced concerns about growing public "complacency" in the face of perceived successful deterrence. This had influenced the GOC's decision to launch its anti-terrorism "capacity building" program.

16. (C) Afghanistan. Wright reaffirmed Canada's support for OEF/ISAF merger and southward expansion of ISAF. South Asia Director General Jim Fox briefed on Canadian lessons learned in Afghanistan, sharing the GOC's conclusion that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the civilian component of PRTs and that strengthening Afghan leadership is key to success in Afghanistan. Addressing the narcotics problem is a prime concern for Canada. The Canadians said there was an opportunity at the G-8 Summit to show more support to the UK on this. Rear Admiral Robertson said that Canada was committed to a continued presence in Kandahar but was awaiting financial approval for establishing its PRT this summer. Responding to a question from Wright about the long-term engagement of the United States, Ambassador Likins asserted that USG was committed to getting things "right" in Afghanistan and was engaged for the long haul. She urged Canada not to let aspects of the ongoing review of global U.S. defense posture overshadow perceptions about that commitment.

17. (C) Pakistan and India. Though not on the agenda for discussion, Wright raised concerns about the security situation in Pakistan and the disturbing trend for a significant increase in the drug trade. He had just returned from the region, he said, and found the situation on the ground worrisome. Despite a robust USG counternarcotics effort there appeared to be reversals in progress and the political process was "very fluid" on the ground, with the emergence of more conservative religious parties. Though President Musharaf says he will remove his uniform for elections in 2007, he had said so before. At the same time, it was Wright's judgment that Musharaf was showing courage and leadership in terms of dealing with India but Wright was uncertain about the prognosis for the next two years.

18. (C) Ambassador Likins said that U.S. relations with India were better than they had been in a long time. It was important to keep the India/Pakistan relationship moving and the United States was cautiously optimistic on this front. Wright acknowledged that his readouts from senior GOI officials indicated that they saw the visit of Secretary Rice as a success. Canada was worried about India's proclivity to heavy spending on armaments; it would be a challenge to keep this under control. There was a need to take the bull by the horns and deal with India and Pakistan on nonproliferation. Both countries faced energy shortfalls in the not-so-distant future; the trend was toward significant growth in nuclear energy for civilian use. Pakistan was not as forthcoming as it needed to be on the nuclear question and has been increasingly active with China on this subject. Wright floated the idea of approaching Pakistan based on both countries' status in the British Commonwealth and proposed a bilateral Canada-U.S. dialogue to discuss how best to advance shared nonproliferation objectives with India and Pakistan.

19. (C) Iraq. In her briefing on Iraq, Ambassador Likins thanked Canada for its support of Iraq reconstruction and urged the Canadians to take "process ownership" of various sectors within Iraqi ministries. Wright acknowledged that the elections had turned out "better than expected." He reaffirmed Canadian commitment to a positive outcome in Canada, citing the continuing civilian police training effort in Jordan and strong support through NATO.

120. (C) Sudan. Wright said the Prime Minister is a strong believer in a Canadian focus on Africa and that we need to act to prevent crimes against humanity in Darfur. But the approach should be through the AU. Canada was undergoing a comprehensive review of its policy in the region (including the ongoing visit to Darfur of the Chief of Defense Staff) to explore options. Wright said that NATO was far more capable than the EU to lend assistance, should the AU invite it. Concluding, he urged Canada-U.S. teamwork on getting assistance to Darfur.

ARMS CONTROL

121. (C) EU China Arms Embargo. Ambassador Likins was cautiously optimistic of progress in getting through to the EU on its prospective lifting of the arms embargo. She noted that in consultations with the EU and member states, some had cited Canada as an example of a country with no embargo on China that maintains good defense cooperation with the U.S., including an ITAR waiver. While USG understood that Canadian policy was not to export military items to China, it might be useful if Canada underscored this aspect to the Europeans. Bristling somewhat, Chapin said that Canada had indeed been delivering the message to the Europeans, emphasizing its effective export control regime. Canada's focus was less on the embargo than preventing sales to China that would affect stability. Chapin said he would raise this issue with the Europeans again to make clear Canadian policy on this issue. Canadian Political M/C John Allen observed that Canada had a vested interest in the embargo: There was some concern that Canada could be "sideswiped by Congress" if the EU were to lift the embargo.

SA/LW

122. (C) Ambassador Likins highlighted opportunities for greater multilateral cooperation, particularly on MANPADS and gave Canada a "heads-up" on upcoming changes to the Canadian exemption in the ITAR that would affect MANPADS exports to Canada. The United States reviewed the exemption and found that MANPADS exports to Canada had been allowed to go to Canada without an export license under the Canadian exemption, a procedure that goes against the Wassenaar Agreement. The exemption will be changes so that MANPADS are no longer included in the exemption and therefore all exports of MANPADS to Canada will require an export license. Chapin said that Canada was "very conscious" of MANPADS and the need to halt and prevent their proliferation. The GOC had received excellent and positive feedback from a number of capacity-building workshops it had undertaken in the context of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF); it hoped to conduct additional workshops on aspects of aviation security and airport vulnerability. Canada hoped to expand this approach in other forums such as the OAS, APEC, G-8 CTAG and would welcome opportunities to "do more" with the U.S. Chapin said Canada was preparing a MANPADS agreement with Russia and asked for a copy of the MANPADS agreement the United States had recently concluded with Russia for use as a model. Ambassador Likins agreed to brief Canada on the agreement. Acting Director for International Crime and Terrorism Peter Bates noted that Canada was conducting workshops on possibilities for fixed countermeasures to MANPADS and said they had been in contact with S/CT on this issue. Ambassador Likins commented that PM/WRA had the lead on MANPADS issues and offered to send a team up to meet with Canada on these workshops. Joint Staff Deputy Director for Politico-Military Affairs Brigadier General Field expressed interest in accompanying the PM/WRA team in their discussion with Canada on MANPADS.

LANDMINES

123. (C) Chapin opened the discussion by acknowledging that USG is the largest single contributor to landmine eradication. He said that Canada supported the U.S. proposal in the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW), but characterized as "very difficult to accept" the proposal in the CD. Canada could not endorse "signing onto a lesser standard" than those of the Ottawa Convention. At the same time Canada wanted to try and find a way forward. Ambassador Likins said the USG commitment to de-mining would remain strong down the road. The public/private partner approach to the Mine Action Plan was proving fruitful and had leveraged USD 50 million. The U.S. continued to have difficulty with its Conference on Disarmament (CD) proposal, though the latter had been crafted to be attractive to signatories of the Ottawa Convention. Ambassador Likins agreed that the goal was to move forward and suggested further discussion on this issue with Arms Control Assistant Secretary Rademaker.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

124. (C) In their concluding remarks, Ambassador Likins and A/DM Wright agreed that consultations had been very useful and were worth repeating at a later date. Wright expressed

hope that a follow-on session could take place in Washington before the end of the year. Ambassador Likins noted that timing would be driven by the selection and confirmation of a new Assistant Secretary for Political Military Affairs.

125. (U) This report has been approved by Acting Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs Rose Likins.

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